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and the *Portrait* (No. 125) to illustrate how unimportant literary interest is in a picture which is so inspiring a study of rich, luminous colour, painted with brilliant dexterity and unflinching firmness.

Of the *Portrait of Philip IV* (No. 130) there is little to be said that is in any way new, except to express regret that the hanging Committee has done such scant justice to it. The portrait is identical with the one in the Museum of the Prado, and opens up the whole question of the authenticity of the Velasquez pictures which are to be found outside the famous Spanish collection. That Velasquez painted not less than forty portraits of his patron is established beyond dispute, but there is, also, little doubt but that many replicas were painted to be sent out of the country as presents. It is a strange history, the life story of this great painter and this weak king! 'Battles were lost and won, the Spanish navy was destroyed, the military supremacy of Spain was wrested from her by France, Portugal became independent, Olivarez retired in disgrace, the young heir-apparent died, and still the calm of the palace was unruffled.' The portraits of the king remain, whilst the errors and injustices of the narrow-minded young monarch and the cruel, elderly bigot remain as human documents which compel us to question the comprehensiveness of our friendly philosopher, M. Bergeret. Truly the history of nations must be written apart from the life story of their kings, and Velasquez, the servant, still lives, whilst Philip the master is no better than dry dust. Of such is the kingdom of Art!

FORTUNY'S UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT BY E. WAKE COOK

As we may never again see Fortuny's masterpieces in London, it would reflect sadly on our critical acumen if we allow them to depart without noting their author's distinctive contribution to the development of art. Our critics, unfortunately, have their eyes turned the other way, and find it easier to join the fashionable pæan of praise to Velasquez than to discern the nature of Fortuny's

unique technical achievement, a task requiring, perhaps, a painter's equipment. Meissonier, carrying forward the traditions of the great Dutchmen, perfected the art of painting large pictures on a small scale. Finish, and the art of concealing the art, could go no further. Advance in that direction appeared out of the question until Fortuny, with the inspiration of genius, achieved the seemingly impossible and united equally high finish with the ease and looseness, the felicitous handling of a brilliant sketch. With equal thoroughness and delicacy of drawing, he gave even greater subtlety, and a harmony and splendour of colour that the great Frenchman never attained. Pigments, in Fortuny's hands, became transmuted into all that is precious; and *The Spanish Marriage* and *The Selection of a Model* gleam like caskets of gems. That his followers should have vulgarised his style by their tinsel-like glitter, and that Fortuny's subjects were sometimes tinged with vulgarity must not blind us to his wonderful technical achievements.

As the present tendency is to paint small ideas on a big scale, to magnify sloppy sketches to heroic proportions, and to emphasise the paintiness of paint, Fortuny's works should prove a useful corrective; and the Guildhall authorities were happily inspired in showing them just when their influence is most needed.

LIVERPOOL.—A large and interesting collection of modern etchings, engravings and fine book-bindings was bequeathed to the city of Liverpool by the late Mr. H. F. Hornby, one of the many commercial magnates associated with the shipping interest. Various estimates as to the pecuniary value of the collection are freely circulated. That which finds most general favour places the sum at £60,000, but those in authority who are presumed to know all about it are distinctly taciturn on the point. However, a selection from the Bequest is now being exhibited in the Walker Art Gallery at the instance of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee of the Liverpool Corporation, and judging from this, the collection is a decided acquisition upon which Liverpool may congratulate itself. Mr.